

MARRIAGE AND THE INVALID.

A Society of New York Women Pledge Not to Marry Consumptives.

THE heredity fad needs to be red-flagged. A few weeks ago some serious-minded women in New York drew up a constitution and by-laws and signed a pledge not to marry any man in whose family there was a predisposition to consumption or to any serious transmissible disease.

Now, in the first place, marriage is quite too individual a matter to be dealt with by societies. In the second place, as our esteemed friend Cicero says: "We pass over in silence" the fact that when the right man comes along any one of those women will take him, whether or no. She will forget to ask him what his great-grandfather died of. The heredity fad is all the more dangerous because it is based on a half truth.

"A lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright, But a lie which is half a truth is a harder matter to fight."



More than that, it appeals to the conscience.

Heredity has become to the conscience and brains of this generation what fore-ordination was to the last. It has shut out the sun from the world. People sit round and brood over the question of what diseases they may have inherited, as our forefathers used over the question whether they were elected to be saved or to be damned. In both cases the freedom of the will has been left out.

"Out from a tomb crept vice with hideous leer;
'I am Heredity,' he said, 'whom all men fear.'
I sleep, but die not: when Fate calls, I come
And generations at my touch succumb.

A lofty shape rose sudden in his path;
It cried, 'You lie!' and struck at him in wrath.
Heredity, the braggart, stark and still,
Fell prostrate at the feet of mighty Will."

Health is not wholly independent of control and care. If you have debts to pay, you must be economical. If the debts were contracted two or three generations back, the chances are that there is also some accrued interest—if they are not outlawed altogether. If you have an inherited tendency to a certain disease, take care of yourself and fight. Live and love like other people. There are worse inheritances than a delicate constitution, or even a marked predisposition to a certain disease. You may inherit consumption and pluck and brains and a cheerful disposition. Is life worth living?

All this in case that you really have debts to pay. The chances are that a good many of them are outlawed or already settled. Your great-grandmother died of consumption, but don't forget that your great-grandfather had lungs like an ox. You have four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and if you go far enough back you can probably find among your immediate ancestry samples of every disease known to man. Do you expect to die of all of them? Or, if you pick out any special disease and look through the whole range of your relatives, you will doubtless find cumulative evidence enough to crush out your last hope of life.

A young lady of a morbid cast of mind recently decided that her family were all doomed to early graves on account of certain scrofulous tendencies which had manifested themselves in three generations and twenty-two individuals, as follows: Grandfather, aged seventy-six, and one aunt, cancer; one cousin, consumption; one cousin, abscesses on leg (neither dead nor lame); one uncle, erysipelas (one attack); brother, aged seventeen, boils on neck (at last accounts not fatal). Is a family tree like this to cut off the whole light of the sun?

Not only in popular belief, but as far as scientific investigation goes, the law of heredity is pure chance. Other things being equal, why wouldn't it be more comfortable and just as reasonable to insist that we inherit all the virtues of body and mind of all our ancestors?

But if we are to deal with this matter of heredity through societies, let us be consistent. An amendment should be introduced to the constitution of the New York society to this effect: "The members of this society are pledged to marry no man any of whose ancestors have ever died."

FROST CAVERNO.

A Chinese girl, the daughter of a prominent magistrate in the province of Shangtung, China, is her father's treasurer and accountant and general assistant in the business pertaining to his public office. She is called a "new woman" by her associates.

A LONDON VIEW OF THE AMERICAN GIRL:

THE London Queen has a good deal to say about American women. This week it says things about the American girl in general, and Mr. Dana Gibson's American girl in particular. "The title, 'Pictures of the People,' fits Mr. Gibson's book," says the Queen, "for almost every one of his subjects is recognizably a person. It tempts natural vanity to say that the girls, who have the air of being more fashioned after a type than the men or the older women, are exponents rather of the English class of beauty than of the American. But that, we are willing to admit, must only be the delusion of patriotic self-complacency. We hasten even to add that American girls with faces of generous yet delicate outline, picturesquely abundant hair and fine, stately carriage, have, happily, not been unknown to us. It is an odd circumstance, however, that the woman whom we in England know for an American on the instant by a certain erect leanness of figure, and by a peculiar stiffness with which the hair is disposed in tendrils upon the brow, and by half a dozen other little indices of which the eye takes cognizance sooner than the mind,

is nowhere to be found in Mr. Gibson's pages. She appears neither as mother, aunt nor chaperon. For her fellow-countryman she does not exist. And yet her existence is no dream of ours. The explanation is that Mr. Gibson is not interested in her, and consequently he forgets her, as some English artists and writers forget the class for whom they care nothing, let that class be ever so British. Mr. Gibson, when he leaves his own land, sees people in much more strongly marked outline. It would ruffle the harmony of nations to write of the Parisians some of the things which Mr. Gibson can express wordlessly with his pen. In a drawing, styled 'At Montmartre,' all the Puritanism of the Pilgrim Fathers seems to reassert itself in the ironic truthfulness with which a group of the lower class of Parisians has been fixed on the paper. There are men and women quite as gross and soulless as these to be seen any night in a London public house, but the artist lets them be. To all of English blood he is, indeed, flatteringly kind, and he sees the pitties at a London theatre as quite the lively, intelligent people they see themselves. He makes these, by the way, a superb foil to the well-bred blankness of the people in the stalls.

PRETTY CUSTOM IN HONOR OF WOMEN.

IT is interesting to note how two small communities conspire to do honor to their womankind on account of services rendered in days long past. The

Swiss Canton of Argovie yearly celebrates a fete which dates back to the year 1712, when the Seigneur de Hallwy raised a regiment of Amazons to assist some Bernese troops who were hard pressed by the Catholic cantons. On a given Sunday the women of the communes of Melterschwanden and Fahrwangen assume lordship over the masterful sex. The married women and girls issue invitations to their husbands and friends, and the whole community assembles at a village inn. The men, who are here entertained to tea, beer and cakes, are obliged to wait till their hostesses appear from an adjoining room to choose them as partners for the dance.

The women shelter and chaperon their guests throughout the evening, and when dancing is done they escort the poor weak men back to their own fire-side. A pretty custom, deserving to be perpetuated.

Another small community on the Isle of Man evinces its gratitude in a more practical manner still. On one occasion an invading force seemed likely to overcome the islanders, when the women rushed to the rescue and defeated the enemy. Since then a Manxwoman, after marriage, becomes possessed of one-half of her husband's property, whether possessed then or acquired at a later date. So absolute is her ownership that she may dispose of her share on death in the manner best pleasing to her.

Miss Mina Zaigler, of Dresden, Ohio, has just been admitted to membership in the Philadelphia Horological Society, an honor of which no other woman can boast.

In the Medical School of Agra, India, seventeen young native women recently passed the examinations, and one of the number, Miss L. Singh, made the second highest mark in the university.

Women prompters are taking the place of men in Covent Garden, London, as it has been found that their voices carry better across the stage than men's and are less audible in the auditorium.

Miss Ellen Terry always has a basketful of clothes for the poor in her home in South Kensington, and when callers come she produces the basket and makes them knit, sew or crochet while they talk.